Comprehensive Examination for Educational Technology Leadership Internship

Jo Ann Guilford

Lamar University

**COMPREHENSIVE EXAM**

Technology competency is not a skill set that, once mastered, is static; rather, it is highly fluid, changing at the pace of technological innovation (Williamson 2009). Technology can be used in the classroom to enhance the learning of students with diverse needs. A classroom today may have students with learning, physical, and/or emotional disabilities. As we understand how students learn, digital tools can help provide the support these diverse learners need. Even with the most structured learning goals educators can provide the flexibility necessary to meet the needs of diverse learners. One way is to use the four practices that Prensky listed to make education relevant to students' lives and truly prepare kids for the future. It is unclear what path technology literacy assessments will take in the future. Some forecast that full-scale implementation of rigorous technology literacy assessments--whether stand-alone or integrated into current high-stakes exams in other content areas--may be almost a decade from full-scale implementation. Until then, it will be the role of technology facilitators and leaders to sustain and propel the work until meaningful, high-quality solutions are readily available (Williamson 2009).

**Position Goals**

**Position Goals**

We now have the opportunity to teach students to be lifelong learners and create their own independent learning practice they can carry with them (Richardson 2007). Richardson (2007) also says one of the most profound shifts we are undergoing is the move from a passive, consumer-based culture to a participatory, production-based culture. To continue to approach schooling from a content delivery model puts us at risk quickly becoming irrelevant. My position goal is to advance to teaching high school technology classes and eventually college courses in the summer. Eventually, I would like an administrative position in the area of Instructional Technology.

**Leadership Goals**

Richardson (2007) says learning is now a 24/7/365 activity. The job of the educator is to prepare the student for lifelong learning and give a foundation to answer questions, solve problems, or at least know how to find the solution. Technology is evolving and students should be able to adapt. That means that instructors should be able to pass this knowledge on to their students.

Prensky (2001) said today's teacher's have to learn to communicate in the language and style of their students. We have to find ways to incoporate the "traditional" curriculum of reading, writing, and arithmetic with "future" digital and technological methods. Our professional development and staff meetings will have to reflect this.

The leadership goals I have set for myself is to become a technology leader on my campus as a beginning and then expand district wide. Young people may be ahead of us in using tools, but leaders like you will help them use the tools in educationally appropriate ways (Solomon & Schrum, 2007). Current issues related to digital equity, online safety, copyright, and other social, ethical, legal, and human issues require that technology facilitators and leaders structure technology use and educate parents, educators, and students about key issues (Williamson 2009).

**Horizon Report**

Beldarrain (2006) said that time is of the essence for both, learners and instructors, activities and content must be relevant and up to date. The 2011 Horizon Report lists the technological trends it expects to see emerge within the next few months to five years. Just as these items become more mainstream and available, so must educational leaders training.  Web 2.0 tools are about writing, communities, peer to peer, and XML (Lanclos 2009).  A few years ago, I had never heard of Jing, Twitter, Wordle, Moodle and some of the other tools that are now a staple in elementary technology education.  There is nothing wrong with learning a few aspects as you go, but someone must be able to help guide students who become lost or confused.

The first horizon includes electronic books such as the Kindle and iPad.  These items will no longer be toy gadgets for adults, but learning tools for children. As the electronic book moves further from a digital reproduction of a printed piece, some writers are seeing it become something far richer, allowing journeys through worlds real and imagined (Johnson 2011).

Johnson (2011) says mobiles embody the convergence of several technologies that lend themselves to educational use, including electronic book readers, annotation tools, applications for creation and composition, and social networking tools. From Twitter to Poll Everywhere, mobiles allow very simple tools to be easily integrated into classroom activities with no need for involvement of IT or support staff. During one of our staff developments held at the beginning of the school year, a speaker used Poll Everywhere with us as a demonstration.

The second adoption horizon considers technologies expected to gain widespread usage within two to three years, and this year’s candidates are augmented reality and game-based learning. Examples are the Nintendo Wii, Xbox Kinect and Sony's Playstation with Move.  These devices that are controlled by natural movements of the finger, hand, arm, and body are becoming more common, although their use in the classroom setting is still being developed.

The future of learning will involve collaborative education with students finding information on their own.  Researchers and developers are just beginning to gain a sense of the cognitive and cultural dimensions of gesture-based communicating, and the full realization of the potential of gesture-based computing within higher education will require intensive interdisciplinary collaborations and innovative thinking about the very nature of teaching, learning, and communicating (Johnson 2011).

**Knowledge Gained**

The job of the educator is to prepare the student for lifelong learning and give a foundation to answer questions, solve problems, or at least know how to find the solution. My technology skills have vastly improved from when I started this course about 18 months ago. I’ve been exposed to all types of software, projects, and ideas that I never knew existed. I’ve been sharing what I’ve learned with the other Technology Applications teacher to hopefully incorporate these new lessons next school year.

I never really considered myself much of a leader, but others around me seem to. I would always be elected team captain for sports when I younger. I was recently asked to help lead a workshop for summer continuing education hours using the Intel training that had been chosen to receive two years ago. My principal also sent me to RSCCC grade book training to help my colleagues learn how to use the new system. This course has helped me think outside of the box. I find myself looking at movie posters, magazine ads, and even newspapers differently thanks to the four principles of design listed by Yearwood. My knowledge base has improved due to the information I’ve acquired through all of the courses.

My attitude regarding special education and my administration (campus and district) has changed as well. I was able to get a glimpse into what they go through daily both legally and financially.

**References**

Beldarrain,Yoany. (2006). Distance Education Trends: Integrating new technologies to foster student interaction and collaboration. Distance Education. 27,2.139-153.

Johnson, L., Smith, R., Willis, H., Levine, A., and Haywood, K., (2011). The 2011 Horizon Report. Austin, Texas: The New Media Consortium.

Lanclos, P. (2009). *The Web 2.0 Toolbox.* Eugene, OR. Visions Technology.

Prensky, M. (2001). Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants Part 1. On the Horizon. 9;5.2-6.

Richardson, Will. (2007). The Seven C's of Learning. District Administration. 97.

Solomon, G. & Schrum, L. (2007). Web 2.0: New Tools, New Schools. ISTE

Williamson, J., & Redish, T. (2009). ISTE's technology facilitation and leadership standards. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.